

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Project Manager

DATE: February 15, 2013

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18503 and 18505 Spring Place NW

(Square 3186, Lots 0001, 0804 and Square 3185, Lots 0052 and 0822, respectively)

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the requested variance relief as follows:

BZA Case #	Square (lots)	Development	Parking Spaces		Loading Facilities	
			Required	Proposed	Required	Proposed
18503	3186 (0001, 0804)	64 apt. units (Building 1)	32	11	1 berth @ 55' feet; 1 platform @ 200 sf. 1 delivery space	No loading berth or platform 1 delivery space
18505	3185 (0052, 0822)	87 apt. units (Building 2)	44	28	1 – 12x55' feet; 1- platform @ 200 sf 12 ft. wide	1 - 12x30 ft 1 platform @ 200 sf 10 t wide

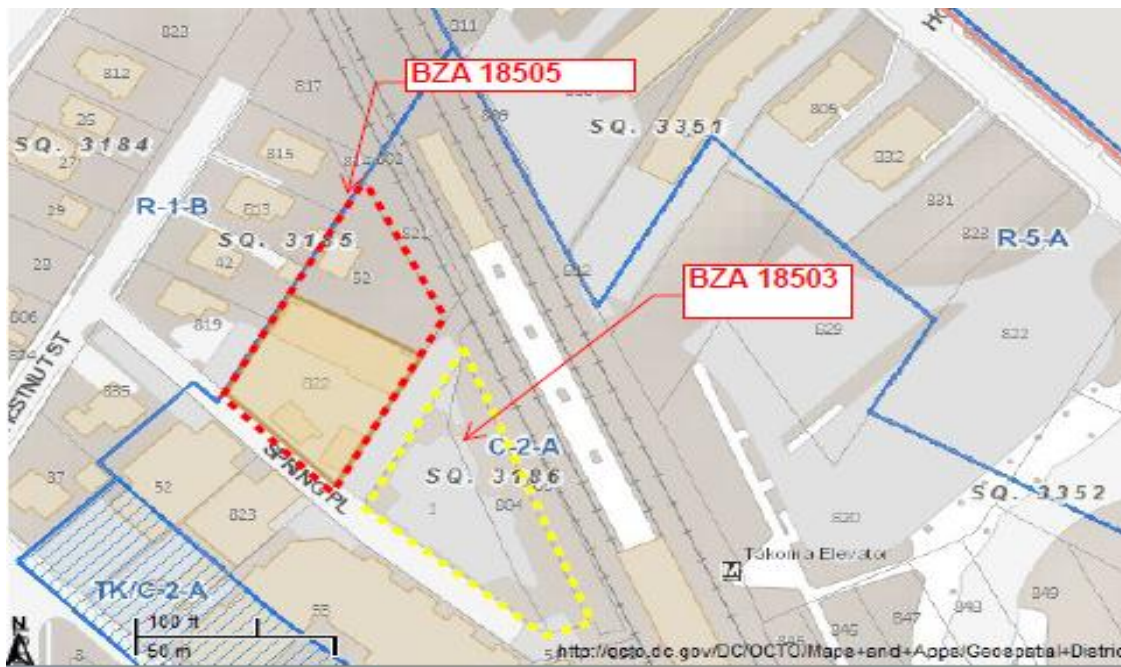
and subject to the following conditions:

- The conditions of the Transportation Management Plan agreed to by DDOT;
- The Applicant shall connect their site to the existing pedestrian infrastructure on either Blair Road or Cedar Street through an ADA accessible path or sidewalk per DDOT's design and engineering standards;
- Loading shall be shared between the apartment buildings;
- The apartments shall be serviced by trucks no larger than 30 feet. Due to safety concerns, loading shall be managed by property management to ensure that there are no backing maneuvers from or to Spring Place.
- Management shall provide annual reports to the ANC and DDOT for a period of two years after completion of the project's final phase.

Both applications were filed concurrently and were requested to be heard as one application by the Board. Due to subsequent findings of their engineering study, the applicant's site plan was recently revised, including the removal of the 30-foot loading berth originally proposed at the rear of Building 1. A loading berth is now proposed in Building 2 across the alley.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	Spring Place – Legal address not currently assigned.
Legal Description	Square 3186, Lots 0001 and 0804 (18503) and Square 3185, Lots 0052 and 0822 (18505)
Ward/ ANC	4 / ANC 4B01
Existing development and lot Characteristics	<p>The vacant lots of the parcel proposed for building 1 comprise 24,504 square feet in land area and combined are triangular in shape, with a steep slope from the north end of the property to the southern lot line.</p> <p>The lots proposed for building 2 are currently developed with vehicle repair shops and services and comprise 26,718 square feet in land area combined.</p>
Zoning	C-2-A – Permits matter-of-right low density development, including, housing to maximum lot occupancy of 60% and 100% for all other uses. A maximum FAR of 2.5 for residential use and 1.5 FAR for other permitted uses, and a maximum height of fifty (50) feet.
Historic District	<i>Takoma Park Historic District</i>
Adjacent properties and surrounding character	The lots are bound by Spring Place to the south, and the Metro and railroad track rights-of-way are on the north. Across Spring Place are apartment buildings in the C-2-A district; and rail road and Metro rights-of-way to the north. The property is within the Takoma Park Historic District which also includes low density, detached, single-family homes. Homes which front on Chestnut Street to the northwest of the property and Square 3185 are representative of residences within this district.



LOCATION and SITE PLAN

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The concurrent applications filed by Keystar Spring Place LLC represent the proposed development of:

- An 87-unit building addressed under application BZA 18505 (Building 2); and
- A 64-unit apartment building addressed under application 18503 (Building 1).

To facilitate the development as proposed, the applicant requests variance relief to reduce:

- the number of required parking spaces; and
- the loading berth and platform requirements under subsection 2201.1 of the Zoning Regulations;

as noted in the tables below.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

BZA 18503

C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	50 ft. max.	N/A	49 ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	2.5 residential 3.0 with IZ	N/A	2.22	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	60 % max.(res) 75% with IZ	N/A	50 %	None required
Parking § 2101	1 per 2 units = 32 spaces	N/A	11	Variance required
Loading § 2201.1	1@ 55' 1@ 200 sf (12' wide)	N/A	None proposed 1@200 sf (10' wide)	Variance required

BZA 18505

C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	50 ft. max.	N/A	49 ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	2.5 residential (3 with IZ)	N/A	2.87	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	60 % max.(res) (75% with IZ)	N/A	71.4 %	None required
Parking § 2101	1 per 2 units = 44 spaces	N/A	28	Variance required
Loading § 2201.1	1@ 55' 1@ 200 sf (12' wide)	N/A	1@30' 1@200 sf (10' wide)	Variance required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 2101.1

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The lots proposed for development are encumbered by a number of factors which create an exceptional situation in the provision of the required number of parking spaces, both below and above grade. The existing topography, the “zone of influence” attributed to the CSX rail rights-of-way, the existence of a 36” water main traversing the lot within Square 3186, all in combination with both properties’ irregular shapes, place limitations on the developer’s ability to provide the 76 (combined) required spaces without losing valuable area to be devoted to the provision of housing.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

No substantial detriment to the public good is anticipated by the requested reduction in the number of required parking spaces, since the development’s location offers seamless transportation access to Metrorail at 500 feet from

the site, the well-used Metropolitan Branch bike trail (in front of the property), as well as being within walking distance to several bus lines, which use the Metro station as a transfer point for service in both the District and Maryland. Reduced parking would facilitate unbundling of the parking with the units, enhancing the rental units' affordability to residents who may not own a vehicle.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The requested reduction is in harmony with the intent of the regulations, which recognizes development in the proximity of Metro stations. It would allow for the development of additional housing units in a neighborhood with access to a variety of transportation modes. As previously stated, the available transit facilities within walking distance of the apartment building would reduce some of the on-street parking demand that may be created by some visitors of the building. Therefore, OP does not perceive harm to the intent of the Zone Plan or Map or any adverse impact on the neighborhood due to overflow parking on neighborhood streets.

b. Variance Relief from § 2201.1

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The parcel's exceptional condition, cited above, creates a practical difficulty for the applicant in providing the required area for the loading berth and platform on this lot. Additional engineering studies recently revealed problems associated with the topography and the CSX and Metro's right-of-ways for the lots in Square 3816 (BZA 18503), which caused the applicant to rearrange the previously submitted site plan, including removal of the proposed loading berth.

The loading berth would now be located in Building 2's development, where the development plan has been revised to accommodate the loading. A 10'x20' delivery space is now proposed for Building 1 (BZA 18503). Presumably, assuming building 1 is constructed first, loading would occur from the private alley or the proposed delivery platform located at the end of the dead-end alley.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

No detriment to the public good is anticipated as the locations of the loading area are well outside of the Spring Place thoroughfare, away from pedestrian activity. As noted in the applicant's transportation study, 80% of the units will be studio and one-bedroom units, which typically require smaller vehicles for move-ins and outs. The loading facilities would be shared and managed by property management to further minimize potential impacts. It is also observed that similar sized apartment buildings in the immediate neighborhood do not provide the required 55-foot loading berths.

iv. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The reduction in the size from 55 feet to 30 feet should not encourage on-street loading and it would be still provided on-site. In addition, the requirement for a 55-foot loading berth is not based on the size of the units within the building, but rather the number of units within the building. By limiting the size of the proposed units to no more than two bedrooms, the need for the larger loading berth will not be engaged. Further, loading would be provided within the development which would be under common management. Loading for building 1 would be provided in building 2 when constructed, or from the delivery area of building 1, proposed to be located at the end of the dead-end alley, adjacent to the Metro/railway right-of-way.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The community expressed several concerns to DDOT and the applicant regarding the potential effects on the neighborhood's parking supply and the lack of pedestrian facilities to access Metro along Spring and Chestnut Streets. The ANC on February 5, 2013 voted to support the application subject to conditions outlined in their report, which will be issued under separate cover.

VII. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) discussed their concerns with OP via phone conversation and email on February 5, 2013. The main issues included:

- Lack of an ADA pedestrian path to Metro;
- The proposed truck turning movements. DDOT would not accept trucks doing back maneuvers into Spring Place due to the bike path that runs along Spring Place; and
- Trucks larger than 30 feet serving the development given the inadequate turning radius for larger trucks. DDOT suggests that management require no larger than 30-foot delivery and commercial trash trucks service the site.

DDOT would provide their report under separate cover to the Board and would attend the hearing to address these concerns.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The proposal to develop housing at a Metro location conforms to smart growth and sustainability policies supported by OP. In recognition of the concerns expressed by DDOT and the community, OP supports the applicant's request to reduce the on-site parking supply and the loading requirements, subject to the conditions outlined in the recommendation of the report.